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THE

DRINKING USAGES OF SOCIETY;

Being the Substance of a Lecture,

DELIVERED BY REQUEST, IN THE MASONIC HALL,

PITTSBURGH,

ON SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 3, 1852.

BY A. POTTER, D.D.

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BOSTON:

REPUBLISHED BY THE

MASSACHUSETTS TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

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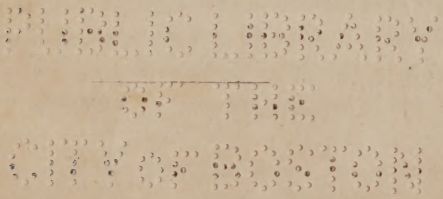

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PREFACE.

The Council of the Massachusetts Temperance Society deem it of great importance to reprint, for general circulation, the following excellent Address on the Drinking Usages of Society, by the eminent divine and philanthropist, Bishop Potter, so well known, not only in this city, but throughout the Union. It was delivered in a sister State, before a large and highly cultivated audience; a portion of the community supposed by many to be free from the dangers which assail the poor and the imperfectly educated.

In this Address, the Bishop has conclusively, and in the most beautiful and fervid language, proved, that, in consequence of the deference paid by the rest of the community to the opinions and practices of the higher classes, the habit of self-indulgence among the latter has such a baneful influence as greatly to retard, if not altogether to stop, the progress of the Temperance Reform.

If the perusal of this admirable speech has a tendency to interest some of our distinguished fellow-citizens, whose position in society so justly commands respect, the holy cause of Temperance will receive an impetus which will at once cheer the hearts and strengthen the hands of all the laborers in this work of benevolence and humanity.

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ADDRESS.

We have assembled, ladies and gentlemen, to contribute our aid in arresting a great and crying evil. We do not aim to promote directly that temperance which forms one of the noblest and most comprehensive of the Christian virtues. Our simple object is to prevent drunkenness, with its legion of ills, by drying up the principal sources from which it flows. To one of these sources, and that the most active and powerful, I propose to ask your attention this evening. The occasion, I need not say, is a most worthy one; one that merits the warmest sympathy and support of every patriot and philanthropist, of every follower of Jesus Christ.

For what is intemperance, and what the extent and magnitude of its evils? Of these we all know something. We all know how it diseases the body; how it disturbs the equilibrium of the intellect; how it poisons the springs of generous affection in the heart, and lays a ruthless hand upon the whole moral and spiritual nature. What drunkenness does to its poor victim, and to those who are bound

to him by the closest ties, you all know. All know, did I say? Let us thank God that few of you can know, or are likely to know, the inexpressible horrors which fill the soul of the inebriate, or the gloom and anguish of heart which are the portion of his family. You know enough, however, to feel, that where this sin enters, there a blight falls on happiness, virtue, and even hope. Look at the palpable shame and misery and guilt which collect within and about one drunkard's home; and then multiply their dreadful sum by the whole number of such homes, which, at this moment, can be found in this Christian city; and you will have an accumulation of sin and sorrow, even at your doors, which no mortal arithmetic can guage, but which is sufficient to appal the stoutest heart, and move to sympathy the coldest charity.

But whence does this vast and hideous evil come? To you, as a jury of inquest, standing over the victims it strikes down, I appeal for a verdict according to truth and evidence. Can it be said, that they who are now cold in death, with a drunkard's shame branded on their memory, "died by visitation of God"? God sends no such curse even upon the guiltiest of his creatures. He may send pestilence and earthquake; he may send blasting and mildew; but he commissions no moral plague, like drunkenness, to carry desolation to the souls as well as bodies of men. This evil, alas! is self-invoked and self-inflicted.

And how? Do men rush deliberately, and with full purpose of heart, into such an abyss? Is there any one so lost to self-respect, to all prudence and duty, so devoid of every finer instinct and sentiment of our nature, that he can willingly sink down to the ignominy and the woe that are the drunkard's portion? I tell you nay. Every human being recoils, with involuntary horror and disgust, from the contemplation of such a fate. He shrinks from it, as he would from the foul embraces of a serpent, and feels that he would sooner sacrifice every thing than take his place beside the bloated and degraded beings who seem dead to all that is noble in our nature or hopeful in our lot. These are victims that have gone blindfold to their fate. Gentle is the declivity, smooth and noiseless the descent, which conducts them, step by step, along the treacherous way, till suddenly their feet slide, and they find themselves plunging over the awful precipice.

And what is that deceitful road? Or which is the perfidious guide who stands ever ready to turn aside the feet of the unwary traveller? Here, ladies and gentlemen, is the great question. To arrest an evil effectually, we must know its nature and cause. It is idle to lop off branches, while the trunk stands firm and full of life. It is idle to destroy noxious leaves or flowers, while the plant still pours forth its malignant humors at the root. If we would go to the bottom of this evil, if we would lay the axe to

the very root of the baleful tree, we must see how and whence it is that unsuspecting multitudes are thus ensnared, never scenting danger till they begin to taste of death.

It will be admitted, I presume, by all who hear me, that, if there were no temperate drinking, there would be none that is intemperate. Men do not begin by what is usually called immoderate indulgence, but by that which they regard as moderate. Gradually and insensibly their draughts are increased until the functions of life are permanently disturbed, the system becomes inflamed, and there is that morbid appetite which will hardly brook restraint, and the indulgence of which is sottish intemperance. Let it be remembered, then, that what is usually styled *temperate* drinking stands as the condition precedent of that which is *intemperate*. Discontinue one, and the other becomes impossible.

But what is the cause of moderate or temperate drinking? Is it the force of natural appetite? Rarely. Nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of those who use alcoholic stimulants do it, in the first instance, and often for a long time, *not from appetite, but from deference to custom or fashion.* Usage has associated intoxicating drinks with good fellowship, — with offices of hospitality and friendship. However false and dangerous such an association may be, it is not surprising, that, when once established, it continually gathered strength; with

some, through appetite; with others, through interest. It is in this way that what we term *Drinking Usages* have become incorporated with every pursuit in life, with the tastes and habits of every grade and class of society. In the drawing-room and dining-room of the affluent, in the public room of the hotel, in every place of refreshment, in the social gatherings of the poor, in the harvest-field and the workshop, alcoholic liquor was at one time deemed essential. Too often it is deemed so still. Many a host and employer, many a young companion, shrinks even now from the idea of exchanging the kind offices of life without the aid of intoxicating liquors, as he would shrink from some sore offence against taste and propriety. Not to put the cup to your neighbor's lip, in one word, is to sin against that most absolute of earthly sovereigns, Fashion.

Here, then, lies the gist of the whole difficulty. Fashion propagates itself downward. Established and upheld by the more refined and opulent, it is soon caught up by those in less conspicuous walks. It thus spreads itself over the whole face of society, and, becoming allied with other principles, is planted deep in the habits and associations of a people. It is pre-eminently so with *drinking usages*. Immemorial custom; the example of those whose education or position gives them a commanding sway over the opinions and practice of others; appetite, with them who have drunk till what was once but com-

pliance with usage, is now an imperious craving; the interest of many, who thrive by the traffic in intoxicating drinks, or by the follies into which they betray men, — here are causes which so fortify and strengthen these usages, that they seem to defy all change. But let us not despair. We address those who are willing to think, and who are accustomed to bring every question to the stern test of utility and duty. To these, then, we appeal.

Drinking usages are the chief cause of intemperance; and these usages derive their force and authority, in the first instance, wholly from those who give law to fashion. Let this be considered. Do you ask for the treacherous guide, who, with winning smiles and honied accents, leads men forward from one degree of indulgence to another, till they are besotted and lost? Seek him not in the purlieus of the low grog-shop; seek him not in any scenes of coarse and vulgar revelry. He is to be found where they meet who are the observed of all observers. There, in the abodes of the rich and admired; there, amidst all the enchantments of luxury and elegance; where friend pledges friend; where wine is invoked to lend new animation to gaiety, and impart new brilliancy to wit; in the sparkling glass, which is raised even by the hand of beautiful and lovely woman, — there is the most dangerous decoy. Can that be unsafe which is thus associated with all that is fair and graceful in woman, with all that is attractive and brilliant

in man? Must not that be proper, and even obligatory, which has the deliberate and time-honored sanction of those who stand before the world as the "glass of fashion," and "rose of the fair state"?

Thus reason the great proportion of men. They are looking continually to those who, in their estimation, are more favored of fortune or more accomplished in mind and manners. We do not regulate our watches more carefully or more universally by the town-clock, than do nine-tenths of mankind take their tone from the residue, who occupy places towards which all are struggling.

Let the responsibility of these drinking usages be put, then, where it justly belongs. When you visit on some errand of mercy the abodes of the poor and afflicted; when you look in on some home which has been made dark by drunkenness, — where hearts are desolate, and hearths are cold; where want is breaking in as an armed man; where the wife is heart-broken or debased, and children are fast demoralizing; where little can be heard but ribaldry, blasphemy, and obscenity, — friends! would you connect effect with cause, and trace this hideous monster back to its true parent, let your thoughts fly away to some abode of wealth and refinement, where conviviality reigns; where, amidst joyous greetings, and friendly protestations, and merry shouts, the flowing bowl goes round; and there you will see that which is sure to make drinking everywhere attractive, and which, in doing

so, never fails, and cannot fail, to make drunkenness common.

Would we settle our account, then, with the *drinking usages of the refined and respectable?* We must hold them answerable for maintaining corresponding usages in other classes of society; and we must hold them answerable, further, for the frightful amount of intemperance which results from those usages. We must hold them accountable for all the sin, and all the unhappiness, and all the pinching poverty, and all the nefarious crimes, to which intemperance gives rise. So long as these usages maintain their place among the respectable, so long will drinking and drunkenness abound through all grades and conditions of life. Neither the power of law aimed at the traffic in liquors, nor the force of argument addressed to the understandings and consciences of the many, will ever prevail to cast out the fiend drunkenness, so long as they who are esteemed the favored few uphold with unyielding hand the practice of drinking.

Hence, the question, whether this monster evil shall be abated, resolves itself always into another question; and that is, Will the educated, the wealthy, the respectable, persist in sustaining the usages which produce it? Let them resolve that these usages shall no longer have their countenance, and their insidious power is broken. Let them resolve, that, wherever they go, the empty wine-glass shall proclaim their silent protest; and

fashion, which now commands us to drink, shall soon command us with all-potential voice to abstain.

Now, what is there in these usages to entitle them to the patronage of the wise and good? Are they necessary? Are they safe or useful?

Unless they can show some offset to the vast amount of evil which they occasion, they ought surely to be ruled out of court. But is any one prepared to maintain that these Drinking Usages are *necessary*, — that it is necessary, or even *useful*, that men should use intoxicating liquors as beverage? Do they add vigor to muscle, or strength to intellect, or warmth to the heart, or rectitude to the conscience? The experience of thousands, and even millions, has answered this question. In almost every age and quarter of the world, but especially within the last twenty-five years and in our own land, many have made trial of entire abstinence from all that can intoxicate. How few of them will confess that they have suffered from it, either in health of body, or elasticity of spirits, or energy and activity of mind! How many will testify that in each of these respects they were sensible gainers from the time they renounced the use of all alcoholic stimulants!

But, if neither useful nor necessary, can it be contended that these drinking customs are harmless? Are they not *expensive?* Many a moderate drinker, did he reckon up accurately the cost of this indulgence, would discover that it forms one of his

heaviest burdens. No taxes, says Franklin, are so oppressive * as those which men levy on themselves. Appetite and fashion, vanity and ostentation, constitute our most rapacious tax-gatherers. It is computed by Mr. Porter, an English statistician of distinguished ability, but of no special interest in the subject which we are now discussing, that the *laboring people* of Great Britain, exclusive of the middle and higher classes, expend no less than £53,000,000 ($250,000,000) every year on alcoholic liquors and tobacco! There is little doubt that the amount, directly or indirectly, consumed in Pennsylvania † annually, for the same indulgence,

* "My companion at the press," says Franklin, speaking of his life as a journeyman-printer in London, "drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast, with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom; but it was necessary, he supposed, to drink *strong* beer, that he might be *strong* to labor. I endeavored to convince him that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread; and therefore, if he could eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer. He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that vile liquor, — an expense which I was free from; *and thus these poor devils keep themselves always under.*" — See Dr. Franklin's Life, written by himself.

† In Western Pennsylvania, one of the most valuable products is bituminous coal. Great quantities are sent down the Ohio, and are paid for in whiskey. I was informed by a distinguished citizen of that part of the State, that every year shows a balance against the producers of coal, and in favor of the distillers!

equals $10,000,000, — a sum which, could it be saved for four successive years, would pay the debt which now hangs like an incubus on the energies of the Commonwealth. In wasting $250,000,000 every year, the laboring population of Britain put it beyond the power of any government to avert from multitudes of them the miseries of want. Were but a tithe of that sum wrenched from the hands of toil-worn labor, and buried in the Thames or the ocean, we should all regard it as an act of stupendous folly and guilt. Yet it were infinitely better that such a sum should be cast into the depths of the sea, than that it should be expended in a way which must debauch the morals, and destroy the health, and lay waste the personal and domestic happiness of thousands. If the question be narrowed down to one of mere *material wealth*, no policy can be more suicidal than that which upholds usages, the inevitable effect of which is to paralyze the *productive* powers of a people, and to derange the proper and natural *distribution* of property. Remember, then, he who sustains these usages sustains the most prolific source of improvidence and want. He makes, at the same time, an inroad upon his own personal income, which is but a loan from God, entrusted to him for his own and others' good.

But these drinking usages are not only expensive; *they are unreasonable.* What is their practical effect? It is that others shall decide for us a ques-

tion, which ought most clearly to be referred only to our own taste and sense of duty. We are to drink, whether it be agreeable to us or not; whether we think it right or not; whether we think it safe or not. Moreover, — and this is sufficiently humiliating, — we are to drink precisely *when*, and precisely *where*, others prescribe. It has been said, that, in some parts of our country, one must either drink with a man who invites him, or fight. It is not long since, in every part of it, one must either drink when invited, or incur the frowns and jeers of those who claimed to be arbiters of propriety. And, even now, he or she who will not drink at all, or will drink only when their own reason and inclination bid, must not be surprised if they provoke invective or ridicule. And is a bondage like this to be upheld? Does it become free-born Americans, who boast so much of liberty, to bow down their necks to a servitude so unrelenting, and yet so absurd?

A German nobleman once paid a visit to Great Britain, when the practice of toasting and drinking healths was at its height. Wherever he went, during a six months' tour, he found himself obliged to drink, though never so loath. He must pledge his host and his hostess. He must drink with every one who would be civil to him, and with every one, too, who wished a convenient pretext for taking another glass. He must drink a bumper in honor of the king and queen, in honor of church

and state, in honor of the army and navy. How often did he find himself retiring, with throbbing temples and burning cheek, from these scenes of intrusive hospitality! At length his visit drew to a close; and to requite, in some measure, the attentions which had been lavished upon him, he made a grand entertainment. Assembling those who had done him honor, he gathered them round a most sumptuous banquet, and feasted them to their utmost content. The tables were then cleared. Servants entered with two enormous hams; one was placed at each end; slices were cut and passed round to each guest, when the host rose, and with all gravity said, "Gentlemen, I give you the king! please eat to his honor." His guests protested. They had dined; they were Jews; they were already surcharged through his too generous cheer. But he was inflexible. "Gentlemen," said he, "for six months you have compelled me to *drink* at your bidding. Is it too much that you should now *eat* at mine? I have been submissive: why should you not follow my example? You will please do honor to your king! You shall then be served with another slice in honor of the queen, another to the prosperity of the royal family, and so on to the end of the chapter!"

But, waiving the *absurdity* and *costliness* of these usages, let me ask if they are *safe*. No one who drinks can be perfectly certain that he may not die a drunkard. Numbers which defy all computation

have gone this road, who were once as self-confident as any of us can be. No one, again, who drinks can be certain that he may not, in some unguarded hour, fall into a debauch, in which he shall commit some error or perpetrate some crime, that will follow him, with shame and sorrow, all his days. How many a young man, by one such indiscretion, has cast a cloud over all his prospects for life! You have read Shakspeare's "Othello," the most finished and perfect, perhaps, of all his tragedies. What is it but a solemn Temperance Lecture? Whence come all the horrors that cluster round the closing scenes of that awful and magnificent drama? Is it not from the wine with which Iago plied Cassio? What is Iago himself but a human embodiment of the Great Master of Evil? And, as that Master goes abroad over the earth seeking whom he may destroy, where does he find a more potent instrument than the treacherous wine-cup? This dark tragedy, with its crimes and sorrows, is but an epitome, a faint transcript, of ten thousand tragedies which are all the time enacting on this theatre of our daily life. How many are there at this moment, who, from the depths of agonized and remorseful hearts, can echo the words of Othello's sobered, but almost frenzied lieutenant, "O thou invisible spirit of wine! if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!" "That men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! That we should with joy, pleasance, revel,

and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!" "Oh! I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial, — my reputation, Iago, my reputation!" "To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange! Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil." In this land, and in our day, there are few cups which, for the young and excitable, are not "inordinate." Wines that are charged high with brandy, or brewed in the distillery of some remorseless fabricator, are never safe. Among wine-proverbs, there are two which are now more than ever significant of truth: "The most voluptuous of assassins is the bottle;" "Bacchus has drowned more than Neptune."

It is not the opinion of "temperance fanatics" merely, that adjudges drinking to be *hazardous.* It is so in their estimation who are close, practical observers and actors in life. Mr. Jefferson is said to have expressed his conviction, — the result of long and various experience, — that no man should be entrusted with office who drank. I have now before me evidence, still more definite, in the twofold system of rates proposed to be applied in one of our largest cities by the same Life Insurance Company. The one set of rates is adapted to those who use intoxicating liquors; the other, to those who do not use them at all. Suppose that you wish your life to be assured to the extent of

$1000, and that you are twenty years of age. If you practise total abstinence, the rate will be $11.60 per annum; if you use intoxicating drinks, it will be $14.70. At twenty-five years of age, the rates will be as $13.30 to $17; at thirty years of age, as $15.40 to $19.60. I have also before me the returns of two Beneficial Societies, in one of which the principle of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors was observed, while in the other it was not. The result has been, that, with the same number of members in each, the deaths in one, during a given period, were but *seventy-seven;* whereas, in the other, they were *one hundred and ten!* making the chances of life as ten to seven in their favor who practise *total abstinence.* This result need not so much astonish us, when we are told, on the authority of persons who are said to have made careful and conscientious inquiry, that, of all males who use intoxicating liquors, one in thirteen becomes intemperate.

Here, then, are results reached by men of business, when engaged in a mere calculation of probabilities. Drinking, according to their estimates, is hazardous, — hazardous to life and property, hazardous to reputation and virtue. Is it not wise, then, to shun that hazard? Is it not our duty? Is not this a case in which the Saviour's injunction applies, — "*If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is better for*

thee that one of thy members should perish than that thy whole body should be cast into hell-fire"? We all consider it madness not to protect our children and ourselves against small-pox, by vaccination; and this, though the chances of dying by the disease may be but one in a thousand, or one in ten thousand. Drunkenness is a disease more loathsome and deadly even than small-pox. Its approaches are still more stealthy; and the specific against it — total abstinence — has never failed, and cannot fail.

But let us admit for one moment and for the sake of argument, — (to admit it on other ground would be culpable,) — let us admit that *you can drink with safety to yourself. Can you drink with safety to your neighbor?* Are you charged with no responsibility in respect to him? You drink, as you think, within the limits of safety. He, in imitation of your example, drinks also, but passes that unseen, unknown line, within which, for him, safety lies. Is not your indulgence, then, a stumbling-block, — ay, perchance, a fatal stumbling-block in his way? Is it not, in principle, the very case contemplated by St. Paul, when he said, "*It is good neither to eat flesh*, NOR TO DRINK WINE, *nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak"?* Yonder are the young and inexperienced, without habits of self-control, and with fiery appetites. Would you have them do as you do? Yonder is one who is just on the verge of the precipice

that will plunge him into shame and woe unutterable: are you willing that he should find in your daily potations a specious apology for his own? Or yonder is one who is already a bondman to this fearful vice, but who feels his debasement, and would gladly be once more free: will you do that in his presence which will discourage him from striking boldly for emancipation? Nay, it may be that he is even now struggling bravely to be free. He has dashed away the cup of sorcery, and is practising that which to him is the only alternative to ruin. Is it well, Christian, — follower of Him who sought not his own, and went about doing good, — is it well that from *you* should proceed an influence to press him back to his cups? — that *you*, by your example, should proclaim, that not to drink is to be over-scrupulous and mean-spirited? — that at *your* table, in *your* drawing-room, he should encounter the fascination which he finds it so hard to withstand, so fatal to yield to?

Nineteen years ago, I knew an instructor who stood in relations most intimate to three hundred students of a college. The disorders which occasionally invade such institutions, and the disgrace and ruin which are incurred by so many promising young men, result almost exclusively from the use of intoxicating liquors. This fact had so imprinted itself on this instructor's mind, that he made a strenuous effort to induce the whole of this noble band to declare for that which was then considered

the true principle, — total abstinence from *distilled* spirits. Fermented stimulants were not included; but it was pointedly intimated that intoxication on wine or beer would be a virtual violation of the engagement. The whole number, with perhaps two or three exceptions, acquiesced; and, for a few months, the effect was most marked in the increased order of the institution, and the improved bearing of its inmates. Soon, however, there were aberrations. Young men would resort occasionally to hotels, and drink champagne; or they would indulge in beer at eating-houses. The evil which, at one time, seemed dammed out, was about to force itself back; and the question arose, What could be done? Then that professor came to the conclusion, that, for these young men at least, there was no safety but in abstinence from *all* intoxicating liquors. He had often protested against including wine in the same category with ardent spirits. But the wine these young men drank was as fatal to them and to college-discipline as rum; and the simple alternative was between continued excesses, on the one hand, or total abstinence from all intoxicating beverage, on the other. Under such circumstances, this professor did not long hesitate. He determined to urge and exhort those for whose welfare he was so fearfully responsible, to the only course which was safe for them. But there was one huge difficulty in his way. It was the bottle of Madeira which stood every day upon his own

table. He felt, that, from behind that bottle, his plea in behalf of abstinence from all vinous potations would sound somewhat strangely. He was not ready to encounter the appeal from theory to practice, which all are so prompt to make, — none more prompt than the young, — when they deal with the teachers of unwholesome doctrine. He determined, therefore, to prepare himself for his duty by removing every hindrance which his own example could place in the way of the impression which he was bent upon producing. Did he act well and wisely? Ye fathers and mothers, who know with what perils the young are encompassed when they go forth into the world, would you have advised him to cling to his wine? Or you, who may be about to commit a fiery and unstable son to a teacher's care and guidance, would you prefer that this teacher's example and influence should be *for* wine-drinking, or *against* it?

But if, in your judgment, that professor stands acquitted, — nay, if you actually applaud his course, what, permit me to ask, is *your* duty? — yours, fathers and mothers! yours, sisters and brothers! yours, employers and teachers! There is not one of you but has influence over others, and that influence is much greater than you are apt to imagine. Is it not a sacred trust, which should never be abused? O parents! do you consider, as you ought, how closely your children observe all your ways, and how eagerly and recklessly they imitate

them? Employers! do you estimate sufficiently your responsibility in regard to hirelings and domestic servants, who are prompt to adopt your habits and manners, but who seldom possess the self-control which your education and position constrain you to exercise? Your precepts, enjoining sobriety and moderation, pass for little. Your practice, giving color and countenance to self-indulgence, sinks deep into their hearts. One hour spent by you in thoughtless conviviality may plant the seeds of sin and ruin in those by whom you are attended! And the crowd of wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, that I see before me, — do *they* always consider with what wizard power they rule over man's sterner nature? It is our pride and privilege to defer to your sex. At all periods of life, and in all relations, you speak with a voice which penetrates to our gentler and nobler sentiments. Most of all is this the case when you burst into early womanhood, encompassed by bright hopes and fond hearts, — when the Creator adorns you with graces and charms that draw towards you the dullest souls. Ah! how little do you appreciate, then, the sway which, for weal or woe, you wield over those of our sex who are your companions and friends! Is that sway always wise and holy? Is it always on the side of temperance and self-command? Alas! alas! could the grave give up its secrets, what tales of horror would

it not reveal of woman's perverted influence, — of woman thoughtlessly leading men, through the intoxicating cup, to the brink of utter and hopeless ruin! One case of the kind was mentioned to me lately. It is but one of many.

A young man, of no ordinary promise, unhappily contracted habits of intemperance. His excesses spread anguish and shame through a large and most respectable circle. The earnest and kind remonstrance of friends, however, at length led him to desist; and, feeling that for him to drink was to die, he came to a solemn resolution that he would abstain entirely for the rest of his days. Not long after, he was invited to dine, with other young persons, at the house of a friend. *Friend!* did I say? pardon me: he could hardly be a friend who would deliberately place on the table before one lately so lost, now so marvellously redeemed, the treacherous instrument of his downfall. But so it was. The wine was in their feasts. He withstood the fascination, however, until a young lady, whom he desired to please, challenged him to drink. He refused. With banter and ridicule she soon cheated him out of all his noble purposes, and her challenge was accepted. He no sooner drank than he felt that the demon was still alive, and that from temporary sleep he was now waking with tenfold strength. "Now," said he to a friend who sat next to him, "now I have tasted again, and I drink till

I die." The awful pledge was kept. Not ten days had passed before that ill-fated youth fell under the horrors of delirium tremens, and was borne to a grave of shame and dark despair. Who would envy the emotions with which that young lady, if not wholly dead to duty and to pity, retraced her part in a scene of gaiety, which smiled only to betray?

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not maintain that drinking wine is, in the language of the schools, *sin per se*. There may be circumstances under which to use intoxicating liquors is no crime. There have been times and places in which the only intoxicating beverage was light wine, and where habits of inebriation were all but unknown. But is that *our* case? Distillation has filled our land with alcoholic stimulants of the most fiery and deleterious character. Our wines, in a large proportion of instances, are but spurious compounds, without grape-juice, and with a large infusion of distilled spirits, and even of more unhealthy ingredients. As long ago as the days of Addison, we read in the Tatler (No. 131) that in London there was "a fraternity of chemical operators, who worked under ground in holes, caverns, and dark retirements, to conceal their mysteries from the observation of mankind. These subterranean philosophers are daily employed in the transmutation of liquors; and, *by the power of magical drugs and incantations*,

raising, under the streets of London, the choicest products of the hills and valleys of France. They can squeeze claret out of the sloe, and draw champagne out of an apple." The practice of substituting these base counterfeits for wine extracted from the grape has become so prevalent in this country, that well-informed and conscientious persons aver, that, for every gallon of wine imported from abroad, ten or more are manufactured at home. "Five and twenty years ago," says the late J. Fennimore Cooper, "when I first visited Europe, I was astonished to see wine drunk in *tumblers.* I did not at first understand that half of what I had been drinking at home was brandy under the name of wine."

These adulterations and fabrications in the wine trade are not confined to our country or to England. They abound where the vine flourishes in greatest abundance. "Though the pure juice of the grape," says our eminent countryman, Horatio Greenough (the sculptor), "can be furnished here (in Florence) for *one cent* a bottle, yet the retailers choose to gain a fraction of profit by the admission of water or drugs." He adds, "How far the destructive influence of wine, as here used, is to be ascribed to the grape, and how far it is augmented and aggravated by poisonous adulterations, it would be difficult to say." McMullen, a recent writer on wines, states that in France there are "extensive establishments (existing at Cette and Marseilles) for the manufac-

ture of every description of wine, both white and red, to resemble the produce not only of France, but of all other wine-countries. It is no uncommon practice with speculators engaged in this trade to purchase and ship wines, fabricated in the places named, to other ports on the continent; and, being branded and marked as the genuine wines usually are, they are then transshipped to the markets for which they are designed, of *which the United States is the chief.* Such is the extent to which this traffic is carried, that one individual has been referred to in the French ports who has been in the habit of shipping, four times in the year, twenty thousand bottles of champagne, *not the product of the grape, but fabricated in these wine-factories.* It is well known that the imposition of these counterfeit wines has arrived at such a pitch as to become quite notorious, and the subject of much complaint, in this country at least."*

In the presence of facts like these, I ask, What is our duty? Were nine out of ten of the coins or bank-bills which circulate, counterfeit, we should feel obliged to decline them altogether. We should sooner dispense entirely with such a medium of circulation, than incur the hazard which would be involved in using it. And, even if we could discriminate unerringly ourselves between the spurious and the genuine, we should still abstain, *for the*

* McMullen on Wines, p. 172.

sake of others, lest our example, in taking such a medium at such a time, encourage fabricators in their work of fraud, and lead the unwary and ignorant to become their victims. But, in such a case, abstinence would be practised at great personal inconvenience. It is not so with abstinence from intoxicating drinks. That can subject us to no inconvenience worthy to be compared with the personal immunity with which it invests us, and with the consoling consciousness that we are giving no encouragement to fraud, and placing no stumbling-block in the way of the weak and unwary.

The question, then, is not, What may have been proper in other days or other lands, in the time of Pliny or of Paul, but *what is proper now, and in our own land.* The apostle points us to a case, in which *to eat meat* might cause one's brother to offend; and his own magnanimous resolution, under such circumstances, he thus avows, — "*If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world stands.*" Thus what may at one time be but a lawful and innocent liberty, becomes at another a positive sin. The true question, then, — the only practical question for the *Christian* patriot and philanthropist, — is this: "Intemperance abounds! Ought not my personal influence, whether by example or by precept, to be directed to its suppression? *Can* it be suppressed while our present drinking usages continue? In a country where

distilled liquors are so cheap and so abundant, and where the practice of adulterating every species of fermented liquor abounds, — in such a country, can any practical and important distinction be made between different kinds of intoxicating liquors? If abstinence is to be practised at all, as a *prudential* or a *charitable* act, can it have much practical value unless it be *abstinence from all that can intoxicate?*" These questions are submitted, without fear, to the most deliberate and searching scrutiny.

Ladies and gentlemen, I conclude. Neither your patience nor my own physical powers will permit me to prosecute this subject. I devoutly hope, that, in the remarks which I have now submitted, I have offended against no law of courtesy or kindness. I wish to deal in no railing accusations, no wholesale denunciations. When Paul appeared before the licentious Felix, he *reasoned* with him, we are told, of *temperance.* It is the only appeal that I desire to make. I might invoke your passions or your prejudices; but they are unworthy instruments, which he will be slow to use who respects himself; and they are instruments which generally recoil with violence on the cause that employs them. There is enough in this cause to approve itself to the highest reason, and to the most upright conscience. Let us not be weary, then, in calling them to our aid. If we are earnest, and yet patient; if we speak the truth in love, and yet speak it with

all perseverance and all faithfulness, it must at length prevail. But few years have passed since some of us, who are now ardent in this good work, were as ignorant or sceptical as those whom we are most anxious to convince. We then thought ourselves conscientious in our doubts, or even in our opposition. Let our charity be broad enough to concede to those who are not yet with us the same generous construction of motives which we then claimed for ourselves. And let us resolve, that, if this noble cause be not advanced, it shall be through no fault of ours; that our zeal and our discretion shall go hand in hand; and that fervent prayer to God shall join with stern and indomitable effort to secure for it a triumph alike peaceful and permanent.

It was a glorious consciousness which enabled St. Paul, when about to take leave of those amongst whom he had gone preaching the kingdom of God, to say, "*I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men.*" May this consciousness be ours, my friends, in respect, at least, to the blood of drunkards! May not one drop of the blood of their ruined souls be found at last spotting our garments! Are we ministers of Christ? Are we servants and followers of Him who taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Let us see to it, that no blood-guiltiness attaches to us here. We can take a course which will embolden us to

challenge the closest inspection of our influence as it respects intemperance; which will enable us to enter without fear, on this ground at least, the presence of our Judge. May no false scruples, then, no fear of man which bringeth a snare, no sordid spirit of self-indulgence, no unrelenting and unreasoning prejudice, deter us from doing that over which we cannot fail to rejoice when we come to stand before the Son of Man!

INTEMPERANCE AMONG THE POOR.

BY REV. DR. CHANNING.

I PASS to another sore trial of the poor. Whilst their condition, as we have seen, denies them many gratifications, which on every side meet their view and inflame desire, it places within their reach many debasing gratifications. Human nature has a strong thirst for pleasures which excite it above its ordinary tone, which relieve the monotony of life. This drives the prosperous from their pleasant homes to scenes of novelty and stirring amusement. How strongly must it act on those who are weighed down by anxieties and privations! How intensely must the poor desire to forget for a time the wearing realities of life! And what means of escape does society afford or allow them? What present do civilization and science make to the poor? Strong drink, ardent spirits, liquid poison, liquid fire, a type of the fire of hell. In every poor man's neighborhood flows a Lethean stream, which laps him for a while in oblivion of all his humiliations and sorrows. The power of this temptation can be little understood by those of us whose thirst for pleasure is regularly supplied by a succession of innocent pleasures; who meet soothing and exciting objects, wherever we turn. The uneducated poor, without resource in books, in their families, in a well-spread board, in cheerful apartments, in places of fashionable resort, and pressed down by disappointment, debt, despondence, and exhausting toils, are driven by an impulse, dreadfully strong, to the haunts of intemperance; and there they plunge into a misery sorer than all the tortures invented by man. They quench the light of reason, cast off the characteristics of humanity, blot out God's image as far as they have power, and take their place among the brutes. Terrible misery! And this, I beg you to remember, comes to them from the very civilization in which they live. They are victims to the progress of science and the arts; for these multiply the poison which destroys them. They are victims to the rich; for it is the capital of the rich which erects the distillery, and surrounds them with temptations to self-murder. They are victims to a partial advancement of society, which multiplies gratifications and allurements, without awakening proportionable moral power to withstand them.

BY REV. DR. TUCKERMAN.

Remove but one obstacle from our way, and I am quite persuaded that three-fourths of the crime and nearly all the pauperism of this class could be prevented. But what great moral results

are to be looked for from the efforts of a few individuals, while the ministers of the intemperance of these are as a hundred to one of their religious or Christian friends? Father, forgive these enemies of souls; for they know not what they do.

It is too true, that, on this subject, the *example* of the rich is far from being what it ought to be, and what it is hoped it may be at some future day.

That the poor are the greatest sufferers by the evil of intemperance, is not to be denied. That they are made poor, in a great majority of cases, by the use of ardent spirit, there is abundant evidence to show. That the retail traffic is a great temptation to forming intemperate habits, the poor and the degraded *themselves certify.*

EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF A SPEECH DELIVERED BY EX-GOVERNOR BRIGGS.

The temperance reformation, like others of a similar moral nature, was obscure in its origin; but its progress had been pre-eminently ONWARD. All over the country we could see the effects of this great reformation; we scarcely took up a newspaper in which we did not find records of the progress of this moral regeneration; its beneficial results might be seen in the humblest dwelling of the humblest laborer, as well as in the stately mansion of the more favored citizen. It was too late to talk of the *incurable* evils of intemperance; we know that these evils ARE *remedied by ceasing to use intoxicating drinks;* intemperate men are now induced to *save themselves.* We are all under great obligations, said His Excellency, as members of a civilized society, to exert all our endeavors to do good around us; and, while we have seen so many evils of intemperance, it is not strange that great and good men should have given their attention to the subject. We have met, as members of the government, to forward this glorious cause, — to set an *example.* The remark has been a thousand times made, and deserves to be a thousand times repeated, that no one, upon drinking the *first* glass of intoxicating liquor, believes that it is the precursor to a habit of drunkenness. Think you that the young man who receives his first glass of wine in social company, — think you that he beholds therein the insidious destroyer which will eventually bring him to ruin? Think you that the laboring man who receives his first glass with his jovial companion, believes that that glass is the beginning of intemperance? Think you that the student, who, with his gay associates, is invited to partake of wine, believes that within that glass are contained the germs for a life of dissipation? And yet how many professional men have

become drunkards! How many statesmen have fallen into deep degradation from an indulgence in such habits! Oh, how many men have fallen, and by that scourge of drunkards, the *delirium tremens!* Men, great in intellect and power of mind, have gone into dishonored graves. He could name many great men who had thus fallen. Alcohol was no respecter of men. It preyed upon men of genius and learning, as well as upon the more humble. This result was the same in other countries as well as in our own. Mr. Briggs here related the anecdote of R. B. Sheridan, the great English statesman and wit. Mr. Sheridan, being remonstrated with upon the dangerous course he was pursuing by his dissipated habits, was told that if he did not abandon drinking he would destroy the *coat* of his stomach, and thus prevent digestion. "Well, then," replied the wit, "if I destroy the coat of my stomach, I will digest in my *waistcoat!*"

The speaker then alluded to the glorious fruits of this reformation, and in glowing language described the happiness which had been diffused among all classes. And this reminded him of a story which he had seen in one of the papers. A reformed drunkard said to his wife, "Mary, how could you live with me when I neglected you and my family, when I was a *drunkard*, and you were without the necessaries and comforts of life?" "Why, my dear," was the reply, "I remembered what you once was; and when I saw you coming home day after day, drunk, dropping upon the floor, and, when laid upon the bed, insensible as a block, notwithstanding your outward miserable appearance and disfigured form; and when you abused me and your children, I remembered what you once was, and believed that there were better days to come. And, thank God, these better days *have* come!" This was one fruit of the cause, and was it not a glorious one? This cause, said Gov. Briggs, is the cause of PATRIOTISM. How could we serve our country better than by promoting the happiness of our neighbors? An English statesman has said that patriotism consisted in doing good to individuals. How, then, said he, can we show our patriotism better than by helping up our debased friend who has fallen into misery? He is a *man*, — he is our brother; the same God who made us made him also; and we have been commanded to take care of the needy and suffering: within his disfigured form he has a *soul!* What greater pleasure than to go about reforming our fallen brother, — doing good to our fellow-men!

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